



**BEETHOVEN**

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**SYMPHONY No. 6**  
*"Pastorale"*

**TOSCANINI**

*and the NBC Symphony Orchestra*

## Beethoven SYMPHONY No. 6, IN F, Op. 68 ('Pastoral')

Beethoven completed his 'Pastoral' Symphony in the summer of 1808, in what were then the wooded environs of Vienna. The first performance was at a concert given by Beethoven at the Theater-an-der-Wien, December 22, 1808. The C minor Symphony (No. 5) was also heard at this concert for the first time.

Berlioz has given us the following delightful exegesis of the 'Pastoral':

## SIDE 1

**First Movement** ['Cheerful impressions awakened by arrival in the country': 'Allegro ma non troppo,' F major, 2-4]

This astonishing landscape seems as if it were the joint work of Poussin and Michelangelo. The composer of *Fidelio* and of the *Eroica* wishes in this symphony to depict the tranquility of the country and the peaceful life of the shepherds. The herdsmen begin to appear in the fields, moving about with their usual nonchalant gait; their pipes are heard afar and near. Ravishing phrases caress one's ears deliciously, like perfumed morning breezes. Flocks of chattering birds fly overhead; and now and then the atmosphere seems laden with vapors; heavy clouds flit across the face of the sun, then suddenly disappear, and its rays flood the fields and woods with torrents of dazzling splendor. These are the images evoked in my mind by hearing this movement; and I fancy that, in spite of the vagueness of instrumental expression, many hearers will receive the same impressions.

**Second Movement** ['Scene by the Brook': 'Andante molto moto,' B-flat major, 12-8]

Next is a movement devoted to contemplation. Beethoven, without doubt, created this admirable adagio [sic] while reclining on the grass, his eyes uplifted, ears intent, fascinated by the thousand varying hues of light and sound, looking at and listening at the same time to the scintillating ripple of the brook that breaks its waves over the pebbles of its shores. How delicious this music is!

## SIDE 2

**Third Movement** ['Merry Gathering of Country-folk': Allegro, F major, 3-4]

In this movement the poet leads us into the midst of a joyous reunion of peasants. We are aware that they dance and laugh, at first with moderation; the oboe plays a gay air, accompanied by a bassoon, which apparently can sound but two notes. Beethoven doubtless intended thus to evoke the picture of some good old German peasant, mounted on a cask, and playing a dilapidated old instrument, from which he can draw only two notes in the key of F, the dominant and the tonic. Every time the oboe strikes up its musette-like tune, fresh and gay as a young girl dressed in her Sunday clothes, the old bassoon comes in puffing his two notes; when the melodic phrase modulates, the bassoon is silent perforce, counting patiently his rests until the return of the original key permits him to come in with his imperturbable F, C, F. This effect, so charmingly grotesque, generally fails to be noticed by the public.

The dance becomes animated, noisy, furious. The rhythm changes; a melody of grosser character, in duple time, announces the arrival of the mountaineers with their heavy *sabots*. The section in triple time returns, still more lively.

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The dance becomes a medley, a rush; the women's hair begins to fall over their shoulders, for the mountaineers have brought with them a bibulous gaiety. There is clapping of hands, shouting; the peasants run, they rush madly . . . when a muttering of thunder in the distance causes a sudden fright in the midst of the dance. Surprise and consternation seize the dancers, and they seek safety in flight.

**Fourth Movement** ['Thunderstorm, tempest': 'Allegro,' F minor, 4-4]

I despair of being able to give an idea of this prodigious movement. It must be heard in order to appreciate the degree of truth and sublimity which descriptive music can attain in the hands of a man like Beethoven. Listen to those gusts of wind, laden with rain; those sepulchral groanings of the basses; those shrill whistles of the piccolo, which announce that a fearful tempest is about to burst. The hurricane approaches, swells; an immense chromatic streak, starting from the highest notes of the orchestra, goes burrowing down into its lowest depths, seizes the basses, carries them along, and ascends again, writhing like a whirlwind, which levels everything in its passage. Then the trombones burst forth; the thunder of the *timpani* redoubles its fury. It is no longer merely a wind and rain storm: it is a frightful cataclysm, the universal deluge, the end of the world. Truly, this produces vertigo, and many persons listening to this storm do not know whether the emotion they experience is pleasure or pain.

**Fifth Movement** ['Shepherd's Song, Glad and grateful feelings after the storm': Allegretto F major, 6-8]

The symphony ends with a hymn of gratitude. Everything smiles. The shepherds reappear; they answer each other on the mountain, recalling their scattered flocks; the sky is serene; the torrents soon cease to flow; calmness returns, and with it the rustic songs, whose gentle melodies bring repose to the soul after the consternation produced by the magnificent horror of the previous picture.

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For Beethoven, the 'Return to Nature' was no deliberately romantic sophistication. To his devout and passionate spirit, it was a resort as spontaneous and naive and profound as the inclination of the medieval mystic's soul toward God. He sincerely and piously believed that wisdom broods upon the hills and in the long forest aisles; that sustenance for the heart could be garnered from sunlight and free winds, and spiritual peace drunk from quiet valley as from a divinely proffered cup. He would have understood that ecstatically confident cry of a Celtic dreamer of today:

'Death will never find us in the heart of the wood!' To his mind, as to Lafcadio Hearn's, had come the thought that illumination of a transcendent kind was yielded 'by the mere common green of the world.'

Beethoven copied from his beloved and much-thumbed volume of Sturm's *Lehr und Erbauungs Buch* this passage: 'One might rightly denominate Nature the school of the heart; she clearly shows us our duties toward God and our neighbor. Hence, I wish to become a disciple of this school and to offer Him my heart. Desirous of instructions, I would seek after that wisdom which no disillusionment can confute; I would gain a knowledge of God, and through this knowledge I shall obtain a foretaste of celestial felicity.' Beethoven himself wrote to the Baroness Droszdick that he was convinced of the fact that 'no one loves country life as I do. It is as if every tree and every bush could understand my mute enquiries and respond to them.' A dozen years before his death he exclaimed: 'Almighty God, in the woods I am blessed. Happy every one in the woods. Every tree speaks through Thee. O God! What glory in the woodland! On the heights is peace—peace to serve Him.' Sir George Grove records a tradition that Beethoven refused to take possession of an engaged lodging because there were no trees near the house. 'How is this? Where are your trees?' 'We have none.'—'Then the house won't do for me. I love a tree more than a man.' Charles Neate, the British musician who knew Beethoven, told Thayer, the master's biographer, that Nature was 'his (Beethoven's) nourishment.'

'When you wander through the mysterious forests of pine,' Beethoven wrote to a friend in Baden nine years after he had composed the 'Pastoral,' 'remember that Beethoven often made poetry there—or, as they say, "composed."' To the music of the 'Pastoral' Symphony Beethoven transferred his delight in the beauty of the world. Back of its charming and ingenuous picturing of rural scenes and incidents and encounters—its brookside idyls, its merrymaking and thunderstorms and shepherds' hymns; back of the element of profound emotional speech connoted by Beethoven's slightly self-conscious deprecation about his music being 'more an expression of feeling than portraiture'—back of all these more evident aspects rises the image of a poet transfixed by the immortal spectacle, and recording his awe and tenderness in songs that cannot help being canticles of praise.

How endearing the music is at its best! Did Beethoven ever write anything fresher, more captivating, than the themes of the first movement—whether or not they are derivations from Styrian and Carinthian folk tunes? And you will search far in his works before you find anything so simply contrived, yet so delectable, as that modulation from B-flat to D in the 163d measure, with the entrance of the oboe on A above the F-sharp of the first violins.

As you listen to this lucid and lovely music, full of sincerity and candor and sweet gravity, you may recall the folk tale of the old man who could always be found at sunrise looking seaward through the shadow of the woods, with his white locks blowing in the wind that rose out of the dawn; and who, being asked why he was not at his prayers, replied: 'Every morning like this I take off my hat to the beauty of the world.'

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# RCA VICTOR

RED SEAL RECORD



"HIS MASTER'S VOICE"

Beethoven  
SYMPHONY No. 6, IN F, Op. 68  
("Pastoral")

**Band 1**—First Movement: Awakening of serene impressions upon arriving in the country  
Allegro ma non troppo

**Band 2**—Second Movement: Scene by the brookside  
Andante molto mosso

Arturo Toscanini  
and the NBC Symphony Orchestra

E2RP-4288

LM  
1755  
Non-Breakable

SIDE  
1

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## LONG PLAY

33 1/3

RCA VICTOR—RCA MONOGRAM—DOG AND PHONOGRAPH—"HIS MASTER'S VOICE"—"RED SEAL", REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.—MARCAS REGISTRADAS

# RCA VICTOR

RED SEAL RECORD



"HIS MASTER'S VOICE"

Beethoven  
SYMPHONY No. 6, IN F, Op. 68  
("Pastoral")

LM  
1755

Non-Breakable

SIDE  
2

Third Movement: Jolly gathering of country folk: Allegro  
Fourth Movement: Thunder storm: Allegro  
Fifth Movement: Shepherds' Song—  
Gladsome and thankful feelings after the storm: Allegretto

Arturo Toscanini  
and the NBC Symphony Orchestra

E2RP-4289

LONG 33 1/3 PLAY

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